

Southside/Rolling Hills – September 21, 2010 Meeting Summary

Steering Committee Attendees:

Evan Covington Chavez, Ray Eurquhart, Camilla Foust, Marie Hunter, Dan Levine, Joe Parker, George Roberson, Karl Schlachter, Lorisa Seibel

Other Attendees:

Phillip Azar, Mayme Webb Bledsoe, Thomas Barr, Dionne R. Greenlee, Jim Wise, Mike Barros, Wilmur Conyers, Juanita Massenburg, Susan Solakian, Shep Smith, Michael Pullum, Larry Jarvis, Sandra Moore, Azzie Conley, Virginia Rogers, Michael Spencer

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Sandra Moore opened the meeting at 4:30 pm and welcomed the Steering Committee (SC) members and other attendees.
- II. **Tax Credit Application Update** – Karl Schlachter began his update, having been charged by the Executive Committee to address the following questions: *What happened?; What will be done going forward to ensure we are successful next time?; What interim steps will be taken and what is the timeline for taking these steps?; and, What action needs to be taken with City Council with regards to financing for the project?* Mr. Schlachter submitted a written report summarizing his findings and made additional comments, citing that they had a number of meetings with the NCHFA to meet the new rule requirements to be awarded the tax credit status.

Report Synopsis:

The application was declined because the City's \$5,486,000 loan commitment was not structured appropriately to meet the new NCHFA requirements. The loan commitment as submitted existed as a single payment from cash flow, with the majority of the loan not to be repaid during the first 30 years. However, NCHFA requirements necessitated that the loan be structured so that the majority of it (the balance less \$730,030) be repayable from cash flows during the first 30 years. This would require that the City provide two separate loans. Had this arrangement been included in the original loan commitment letter, the project would have earned an additional 30 points, enough for the award of the tax credits.

By revising the City's loan commitment, and with project partners initiating efforts by January 2011 to improve the application's "Site Evaluation" score (via the implementation of various neighborhood

rehabilitation and improvement projects), it was deemed that the application would be more competitive next year.

The City Council would need to reconfirm the financing commitment of \$5,486,000.00 for Phase I.

Mike Burros indicated that the City continues to be very supportive and excited about this project. Others asked about a timeframe for next steps, however this discussion was deferred to take place during the SC Retreat.

Joe Parker asked for clarification as to whether or not the recommitment request would have to go back through the City's full evaluation process. It was suggested that while the project would merit an agenda item, there was no conceivable reason to expect difficulty in gaining approval again. Mr. Schlachter stated that he didn't believe there would be any issues, and that original cost estimates used were developed based upon a very conceptualized plan.

III. Subcommittee Reports

a. Housing - Lorisa Seibel reported that the Housing Subcommittee met on Monday, August 23rd and would meet again on Monday, September 27th. Camilla Foust is the co-chair. Currently, there were approximately 30 homeowners who needed assistance in Southside. About 15-20 homes were in need of urgent repairs, and a request was put forth asking the City to begin working on these homes in October (at an estimated cost of \$150,000-\$200,000). Ms. Foust would be meeting to discuss recommendations for repairs for her own home, and Habitat was expected to begin work on other dwellings in the area. Ms. Seibel also reported that there were 2 homes about to receive benefits for urgent repairs, and that all of the 30 targeted dwellings could potentially need weatherization, beautification, and accessibility work. Services to help prepare residents for repairs, rental options, homeownership, jobs, etc., were still needed, as well as special needs housing for seniors and those who were disabled. It was also suggested that perhaps Southside Community Center staff could coordinate such services.

Ray Eurquhart suggested that the Human Capital Subcommittee merge with the Housing Subcommittee. This request was placed on hold as an item to be addressed in the near future, as it was deemed to involve a procedural matter, i.e. the consolidation of two subcommittees.

ACTION ITEM: Examination of subcommittee structure and the evaluation of an option to consolidate the Housing and Human Capital Subcommittees.

Evan Covington Chavez pointed out that there seemed to be multiple potential needs. She asked if there was documentation noting exactly what each dwelling needed. Ms. Foust confirmed the existence of such a list.

Ms. Moore suggested that the implementation of actions to address these needs should be discussed during the retreat. For example, it would be valuable to determine the degree of urgency of various needs.

ACTION ITEM: Determination of procedures to implement various subcommittee recommendations.

Regarding urgent rehab needs, Michael Pullum stated that his department within the City had been charged to send out information regarding Southside. He suggested that perhaps the dissemination of information should also be expanded to areas surrounding Southside, so that others could also receive some form of assistance for their homes.

Ms. Moore reminded the group that the area of concentration was initially decided upon with the SC focused upon Rolling Hills/Southside as the priority. She reiterated that this was one of the guiding principles for the group.

Ms. Covington Chavez asked for clarification regarding the utilization of the information presented by the Housing Subcommittee. She inquired if that committee was asking the SC to agree with the prioritization, including the presented cost estimates.

ACTION ITEM: The Housing Subcommittee requested that the Steering Committee support the designation of urgent repairs as a priority.

Based upon the report, the SC agreed to set urgent repairs as the first priority. Requests for repairs that fit in any of the report categories would be eligible.

For the record, Ms. Moore also pointed out that while there were many SC members and multiple stakeholders affiliated with this project, of the current SC membership, there were approximately one-third present this evening. She stressed that it was really important for all to take notice of who was consistently working and coming to meetings. She also asked that everyone must continue

to revisit the actions of the SC, and review the guiding principles initially set forth and adopted. For example, Habitat was not on the SC, but was on the Housing Subcommittee.

Ms. Seibel reiterated that the needs presented were all things that were critical. Dan Levine expressed that these types of needs were usually related to the occurrence of housing redevelopment. Mr. Eurquhart expressed that the “designated” needs should be based upon whatever the community desired, and that there would be some overlap with the work of the Human Capital Subcommittee in this area.

ACTION ITEM: The priorities of the Housing Subcommittee’s report should be coordinated with those of the Human Capital Plan, and consensus determined.

- b. Human Capital Plan - Ms. Moore reviewed what had occurred to date, i.e. the design of a framework for resources to be allocated for the project. She stated that Urban Strategies was asked to prepare a “rough” one-year budget for this project. This was in progress. While final figures were not yet “firm,” a good launching point had been established. Urban Strategies had committed to very quickly taking the priorities from the upcoming retreat to revise initial estimates. She expressed that there was a clear willingness between the City, the SC, Urban Strategies and McCormack Baron Salazar to find the resources for the final set of priorities the group decided upon. Also, Urban Strategies was seeking national partners as well.

Marie Hunter added an inquiry as to when the community could expect to see continued rehab work take place in Southside. She suggested that perhaps the City should have Ms. Rogers call homeowners regarding what it would take to repair their homes.

ACTION ITEM: The issue regarding *who* should lead the process of sustaining community improvement should be discussed and a plan implemented.

Larry Jarvis expressed the interest to introduce City inspection personnel to the community. He stated that the first step has to be for staff to go out there and record things step-by-step.

- IV. **Report on “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” Event** – Mayme Webb Bledsoe announced that the Southside Consensus group had worked diligently to engage residents in discussions regarding what they perceived the issues to be in Southside. She distributed a summary of the activities that occurred during the “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” event on Saturday, August 21st as well as a report presenting the findings

incorporating resident feedback. Southside Consensus team member Thomas Barr relayed some of the data that was collected from the residents, indicating that 31 homeowners were surveyed. Of these, 14 belonged to the neighborhood association. Regarding education, 35% of these residents had not completed high school, yet over 30% had at least completed high school or attained a college degree.

Mr. Barr continued to report that 40% percent stated that no one required health care in the home, and 14 residents indicated that there were family members living with them who were unemployed. One resident was self-employed, and 35% of the others were retired.

Many residents expressed concerns regarding crime, drug activities in the community, and the need for programs for children and seniors. The majority wished to see Southside cleaned up, and something done about the boarded up homes. Some expressed disappointment in the amount of police presence in light of ongoing gang activity.

Ms. Covington Chavez noted that similar data has been collected periodically. However, she wished to point out the change of vision in Southside because of the community's residents. She didn't know about the history of the beauty shop around the corner, or many of the other stories that residents shared regarding Southside's past during Saturday's event. She continued stating that those sentiments fueled her own passion for this type of work. All of these stories symbolized the life that needed to be brought back in Southside. While "numbers" were "just numbers," it was important to realize that there were people who remembered Southside when it was a closely-knit community. Ms. Covington Chavez stated that we needed to remember that, and that this community was striving to return to its former state. She thanked the Southside Consensus group for helping to build the momentum.

- V.** Review Critical Upcoming Dates and Events
 - a.** Monday, November 1 → Housing Sub-Committee, 4-5 pm, Southside Community Center
 - b.** Date TBD → Steering Committee (Additional details forthcoming)

Ms. Moore adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Dionne R. Greenlee